FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THREE BIRDS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS
Virus Is Connected to Deaths of Four People in California

San Diego Vector Control officials announced today that two American Crows in El Cajon and a Western Scrub Jay in Poway tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing the County's total to nine birds this year.

"While we have no human cases of West Nile virus reported in the county so far, the discovery of three new dead birds confirms the virus is still here and active," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "Residents should not let their guard down, and continue to take precautions."

Two deaths in California were announced earlier this week, and a total of four people in the state have died from complications associated with West Nile virus this year. Another 52 Californians have become ill from the disease.

West Nile virus is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes. Some infected people may experience no visible symptoms, but serious cases can result in a neuroinvasive disease or complications that can lead to paralysis, coma and even death. To prevent the virus:

- Wear insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants when outside, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Maintain windows and screens to keep mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites around your home and use mosquito eating fish in unused swimming pools, ponds and fountains.

To report dead birds or mosquito breeding sites, call County Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO, or visit the County's West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com. A dead bird must meet the following criteria: has been dead for less than 24 hours, does not have a foul odor, is not covered with ants or flies, is not stiff; body is intact and has not been hit by a car, has not been shot, or killed by animals.

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